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21 January 1965

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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*South Vietnam: Premier Huong has made further concessions to the military to get them to fill their four appointments in his cabinet.

[After] the four generals concerned failed initially to appear for investiture ceremonies on the grounds that the new cabinet was still not sufficiently "revolutionary." [Huong agreed to replace two additional civilian ministers, in foreign affairs and health, early next month]

[In addition, according to Interior Minister Vien who reported the concessions, the two generals heading the youth and psychological warfare ministries will now have military deputies, and General Thieu, a new deputy premier, will be given responsibility for supervising the above ministries, plus defense and other offices involved in counterinsurgency]

[Ambassador Taylor comments that this will create a virtual military enclave within the government]

[The last-minute military demands were raised primarily by Air Force General Ky, the new youth minister. Ky is apparently still implying that he may soon return full-time to his air force command.]

Huong's concessions were probably prompted by his desire to retain military support against the Buddhist challenge. The Buddhist hierarchy yesterday announced that five top-ranking monks were embarking on a hunger-strike "to the death," if necessary, to force Huong's ouster. Although Buddhist leaders stated that they were simultaneously calling for an end to public agitation, they were unable to prevent their followers in Saigon from scuffling with police yesterday, and their hunger-strike may further arouse public emotions.

Communist China: Peiping's decree extending military tours of duty may result in a significant increase in the size of the Chinese armed forces.

The 19 January decree extended by one year the terms of service for the army, air force, and the navy. The former terms of service, in effect since the military service law of 1955, were three years for the army, four for the air force, and five for the navy. The decree established a five-year tour for a category of unspecified "special army units."

The Chinese previously had been encouraging conscripts to extend their tours voluntarily, a policy which apparently has had only limited success. The new decree makes an extension mandatory. It is probably partly a move to retain trained personnel. It will also reduce the proportion of green recruits that are in the army at any one time.

The strength of the Chinese armed forces has been estimated at 2.5 million. It is not clear whether the new decree affects personnel now in service, although this is suggested by the wording of Peiping's announcement which states that the decree affects the duration of "current service" of enlisted men.

The net effect of retaining most of those who would normally be demobilized at this time would be to increase the size of the armed forces by a number close to the annual conscription level of 500,000 to 700,000.

Taken with other recent developments, the new decree indicates that Peiping is substantially increasing its already high state of military preparedness.

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Burundi: A Rwandan refugee employed by the US Embassy has confessed to the assassination of Burundi's prime minister.

{According to the Burundi King, who passed the information to Ambassador Dumont, the assassin says he had accomplices but has not named them}

No disorders have yet occurred in Burundi, but reprisals against the refugees may occur[once it becomes known that the assassin is a Rwandan] Most of the 150,000 Rwandan refugees in Burundi are Tutsis, while the majority of the inhabitants are Hutus, some of whose leaders hope to take control of the Burundi government from Tutsi leadership as the Hutus in Rwanda have already done. Hutu reprisals may also fall on Congolese rebel elements, with whom a number of Rwandan refugee leaders have been involved.

{Burundi's security force of 2,000 probably could not prevent widespread attacks on the refugees, but a strong appeal from the King might avert them} *asked*

The King meanwhile has[also told the ambassador that] Joseph Bamina, a Hutu, [has agreed] to become the new prime minister. Bamina's selection indicates that the King is still intent on reversing or at least moderating Burundi's policies favoring the Congolese rebels and the Chinese Communists. The appointment will also probably serve to reduce Hutu pressures.

*USSR - Cuba - Latin America: A communiqué of Latin American Communist parties, reported by TASS on 18 January, strongly advocates a strengthening of the "national liberation movement" in Latin America, with special regard for Cuba's need to counter US pressure.

The communiqué reports the conclusions reached at a meeting of representatives of Latin American Communist parties in late 1964.¹

[redacted] The communiqué singles out the "freedom fighters" in Venezuela, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay, and Haiti as those best qualified to receive aid.

[redacted]
In late December, Che Guevara, on a tour of Africa, and pro-Castro Chilean Senator Salvador Allende, addressing a leftist rally in Montevideo, were already pushing this line. Each called for the formation of a Latin American "international" to coordinate "national liberation movements" in the hemisphere.

[redacted]
The USSR has encouraged Latin American Communist parties to widen their contacts with non-Communist leftist groups in an effort to secure a broader

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popular base. Moscow's primary short-term goals in Latin America are to secure the economic and political viability of the Cuban regime, as well as to weaken the US position in the hemisphere. It has probably advised Havana to exercise restraint in the manner in which it supports and encourages various insurgent groups

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Dominican Republic: Triumvirate President Reid has successfully completed his maneuver to get rid of National Police chief Peguero.

Reid apparently has tried to handle the shake-up in such a way as to avoid the appearance that Peguero's ouster was engineered by Brigadier General Wessin y Wessin, who commands the country's most powerful military units. To maintain the balance of power between the armed services, Reid also ordered the removal of the air force chief, Brigadier General Roman Carbuccia, who is closely allied with Wessin y Wessin.

The National Police, which was placed under armed forces command on 13 January, is now headed by Brigadier General German Despradel, an above average police officer and a great improvement over Peguero. The new air force chief of staff, Brigadier General Juan de los Santos, is believed to be somewhat better qualified for the job than Roman Carbuccia.

Reid has faced constant opposition in his efforts to assert civilian control over the armed forces and to remove incompetent military leaders. His difficulties with the military are likely to continue.



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NOTES

Laos - North Vietnam: [Communist truck traffic into the Plaine des Jarres via Route 7 apparently is continuing despite destruction of the Ban Ken bridge by air attack on 13 January.]

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[50 trucks loaded with supplies fording the river near the destroyed bridge on the night following the air strike. The Communists may improve the natural ford with a submerged log bridge, as recent aerial photography shows they have done along other key routes where bridges have been damaged by air attacks or flooding.]

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Yugoslavia: [President Tito will soon launch a personal campaign to counter Communist China's growing influence among the African countries. Tito will begin the campaign in late January or early February with visits to Ethiopia, the UAR, and Algeria, [redacted] His trip is apparently intentionally planned to take place just prior to the second conference of Afro-Asian countries, tentatively scheduled for spring in Algiers, which the Yugoslavs fear will provide China a further opportunity to gain influence among these countries at Belgrade's expense!]

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